



Rwanda - Non UBS

Education and Reconciliation - *Literacy in Rwanda*

Overview

Rwanda hit the Australian news in devastating fashion in 1994 as people became aware of a genocide committed by one Rwandan people group against another. During the genocide against the Tutsi, it is estimated that 800,000 to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred. While it is close to 30 years ago, the memories and scars of that period are still very close to the surface.

African Enterprise Rwanda report emerging wounds, lingering trauma and current crises are exposing the fragile state of individual and community relations, threatening to undo the gains of the past 26 years. They believe this fragility can be linked to a declining commitment to Christian faith and resultant decline in moral and ethical foundations.

The Need

Rwanda is a densely populated, land-locked country, with a population of 12 million, in east-central Africa. Its neighbours are Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Despite dramatic progress in reducing poverty and lifting living standards in the almost 30 years since the genocide, it still ranks 157 out of 189 countries according to the Human Development Index.

Government commitment to free education has lifted literacy levels, but 13% of young people below 24 are still described as having insufficient knowledge and skills for critical thinking and meaningful participation in their own development later in life.

Children born during the genocide are now adults. Many are confused by the differing narratives around the massacres and reconciliation processes. Adding to the complexities, former prisoners, jailed for their involvement in the genocide, are now being released back into the community. This is creating fuel to an already highly charged environment. Many of the affected people and communities on either side struggle with revived feelings of pain, vengeance and retribution. Social cohesion is elusive, and while the task ahead is significant, this project will promote healing and reconciliation based on biblical principles.



Project Goals

This project seeks to address these emerging issues by promoting literacy, Bible literacy and reconciliation based on biblical principles. Through enhancing Biblical knowledge at primary and secondary schooling, along with

parental and teacher training support, the project will facilitate healing of wounds and restoration of relationships, with God, among individuals and ultimately entire communities.

Impact

Five specific groups are being targeted in this project: school students and out of school youth; teachers; parents; pastors; and grassroots leaders.

The project will track life impact based on surveys, reports, literacy tests and decreased violence between the Hutus and Tutsis.

For the youth, the aims of the project are a reduction in genocide ideology; increased reconciliation between the two people groups; and improved literacy and analytical skills.

For the teachers, the aims are that they will report confidence in transmitting

the message of peacebuilding and reconciliation; that parents will exhibit a greater understanding of the foundations of repentance and forgiveness and provide guidance to their children; that pastors will objectively approach division in their congregation and leaders will actively participate in the peacebuilding, healing and reconciliation program.

Since the project is in line with the government priorities to enhance unity and reconciliation, education for all and gender equality, our Rwandan partners are confident that the project will be accepted by the local leadership and the community in general.

Prayer Needs

- This is a large scale project. Pray that key staff can mobilise stakeholders, hire the right people for roles, prepare instruction materials, organise peace building and reconciliation clubs and myriad other tasks and logistics.
- Pray that the on-ground partnership between African Evangelistic Enterprise Rwanda and Bible Society of Rwanda will be strong, cohesive and collaborative.
- Pray that all involved will model the Christian principles of forgiveness, peace-building, kindness and grace that they are wanting to sew into these young people's lives.

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Matthew 5: 9 (NIV)